



June 2012

During this time of the year, we always look forward to watching the transformation that takes place here onsite; hills turn mint green, flowers bloom in a vibrant rainbow and wildlife seems to multiply overnight. At the same time that this natural transformation happens, we are busy restoring areas of the site to its natural beauty by removing old, deteriorating buildings.

We recently hosted a community tour to share the transformation and view some newly demolished sites as well as areas where demolition activities will occur this year.

During the tour, we discussed how structure removal will allow us to thoroughly sample the soil underneath buildings and roads so we can determine whether chemicals are present and at what concentration; an extremely important step in the cleanup process. We also shared details of the demolition process, which includes regulatory oversight from the California Department of Toxic Substances Control.

As the site undergoes this change, it provides an educational backdrop for college students, like our recent visitors from Woodbury College and Pomona College as well as long-term environmental partnerships from organizations like the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society and the Pollinator Partnership.

For a glimpse of the transformation that is taking place at the site, we invite you to visit the site on one of our bus or walking tours. We look forward to continuing to work with you toward a timely and effective cleanup of our property and realizing our vision of open space.

Sincerely,

**Tom Gallacher**  
Site Director

**Steve Shestak**  
Director of Remediation



## Audubon Society Selects Lab Site for Birding Programs



*Birdathon team members scout for birds.*

To increase its avian knowledge and support conservation efforts, the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society set up a bird banding program at the former field laboratory. The purpose of the study is to gather baseline data and evaluate the effect of demolition and remediation activities on birds. The San Fernando Valley Audubon Society (Audubon Society) is dedicated to promoting bird life appreciation through resource conservation and habitat preservation.

“Since Boeing plans to donate its portion of the property for preservation as open space, conservation of the area and its wildlife has become a high priority for us,” said Mark Osokow, San Fernando Valley Audubon Society. “While a number of bird life studies have been completed in the nearby Santa Monica Mountains, bird life in other ranges, like Simi Hills, has not been well studied.”

The Audubon Society selected an area of the site called the Southern Buffer Zone, a biologically-rich area that

never housed buildings and never supported site operations. There, workers attach a metal band to each bird’s leg so that various aspects of the bird’s life can be determined through an initial study and later recaptures.

“Birds serve as indicators of environmental quality and bird banding is a necessary prerequisite to research migration routes, migratory connectivity, habitat relationships and behavior,” said Osokow.

Since bird banding activities began last year, the San Fernando Valley Audubon Society has been impressed with the diversity of avian wildlife at the site. According to Osokow, the society banded 224 birds from approximately 30 species; notably the canyon wren

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# Audubon Society

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Osokow bands an Audubon's Warbler.

species, which is rarely captured anywhere in the United States. In addition, the following birds groups have been processed: wren-tit, oak titmouse, nuthatches, vireos, warblers, towhees, sparrows, finches, woodpeckers, crows, and hummingbirds.

The San Fernando Valley Audubon Society provides a host of environmental activities in the community including bird walks, habitat protection and general education programs. To support its educational and conservation activities, it recently hosted a "Birdathon" at numerous locations in the Santa Susana Mountains and Simi Hills, including the former field laboratory.

During the Birdathon, a team of birders identified as many species of birds as possible in one area over a 24-hour period. Donors pledged a fixed amount, typically between \$1 and \$5 per species for each species identified by the team. All donations received go toward the Audubon Society's Bird Observatory program.

More information about the Birdathon can be found at: <http://www.sfvaudubon.org/annual-birdathon/>.

## Transforming aerospace history into open space



*After.* Components Test Lab III after demolition and hydroseeding



*Before.* Components Test Lab III before demolition.

Boeing is making significant progress in cleaning up its land at the former Santa Susana Field Laboratory and preserving it as open space by the end of this decade.

Since acquiring the Cold War-era federal government rocket engine testing and energy research facility as part of the purchase of the defense assets of Rockwell in 1996, Boeing has removed more than 400 buildings, tanks, test stands, and structures from the site. Late last year, Boeing removed the Components Test Lab III, a test area used to test rocket engine turbo pumps, and installed erosion controls and reseeded the area with native plants and grasses.

Boeing – along with NASA and the U.S. Department of Energy – is cleaning up the Southern California site. Working closely with state regulators, Boeing is on schedule to remove its remaining buildings and structures by the end of next year.

In addition to removing old buildings, more than 70,000 cubic yards of contaminated soil has been remediated – enough to fill 4,300 dump trucks – and 900 acres of land has been restored with native vegetation.

Santa Susana, a former federal government rocket engine and energy research laboratory near Los Angeles, was critical to rocket engine testing that supported nearly every major space program in U.S. history, from the earliest satellites through the Space Shuttle.

Once cleanup on Boeing's 2,400-acre site is completed, it will create one of the few remaining wildlife corridors in Southern California, connecting the Sierra Madre ranges to the Santa Monica Mountains and the Pacific Ocean.

# Woodbury University students use Santa Susana as learning lab

For decades, Santa Susana served as one of the nation's preeminent federal government rocket engine testing and energy research laboratories. Now, the site is serving as a learning laboratory for a group of landscaping students from Southern California-based Woodbury University.

The students produced designs for potential interpretive centers that would allow self guided tours highlighting the biological and historical resources at the site.

"After cleanup is complete, our plan is to preserve our land as open space parkland. The designs the students shared were extremely thoughtful and creative and underscored the educational opportunities the site provides as well as the valuable

new insight the students bring," said Paul Costa, environmental manager at Santa Susana.

In addition to designing interpretive centers, some students, such as Courtney Power tackled the issue of remediating the site using non-invasive cleanup techniques. Her design, "Mission Possible," centers around the use of tripod-styled modules that resemble upside down tee pees to clean chemically-impacted soil.

"I wanted to challenge myself and what drew me to the site the most was trying to figure out how to clean it and preserve it for future generations, while protecting its cultural and historical diversity," said Power. In addition, Power recognized the varying site topography and created a method that would work with ephemeral streams, riparian forests and valley ridges.

In her plan, Power proposed a tripod structure, made of bamboo sticks and biodegradable fabric, would be elevated high enough so that it wouldn't be disturbed by animal traffic. It also would allow the chemicals in the soil to break down over time, which is referred to as natural attenuation. Native California plants



Woodbury students on site tour; Power's project, both drawings and 1/2 scale model of tripod structure

like *Polypogon monspeliensis*, or rabbit's foot grass, would be added to the soil to aid in the natural remediation process.

# Oak Park High School Rocket Team Takes Flight

Oak Park Rocket team members.



A group of nine Oak Park High School students armed with high hopes and a handmade rocket recently took 17th place in Team America Rocketry Challenge's (TARC) National Fly-Off. The flight was the culmination of their three year dream to design, build and fly a competitive rocket.

Thanks to their dedicated patience, engineering prowess and the financial support of donors like Boeing, their rocket, dubbed, 'Dreamliner,' after Boeing's new 787 Dreamliner, soared high enough to help the team qualify for the finals by

scoring in the top 100 out of 700 teams participating nationally. At the finals, Oak Park finished 17th out of the top 100.

"The Oak Park High Rocket club inspires students to pursue advanced studies and careers in science, engineering and aviation. It has taken the team three years to achieve this goal so I am very proud of them and this amazing accomplishment," said Tony Knight, Superintendent, Oak Park Unified School District.

The club continues to dream and now has their sights set on participating in the NASA Student Launch Initiative, a highly selective program offered to colleges and universities and to the top 25 TARC teams in the nation. The team will work with NASA to build a high powered rocket that will reach one mile in altitude and carry experimental sensors and payloads.

## Tour Opportunities

Boeing, NASA and DOE will host the following bus tours for interested community members:

### Bus Tours

Friday, August 17, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.; 1 – 4 p.m.

Saturday, September 22, 9 a.m. – 12 p.m.; 1 – 4 p.m.

If you would like to join us, please call 818-466-8163 for our tour schedule and e-mail your RSVP to [santasusanacommunitytours@boeing.com](mailto:santasusanacommunitytours@boeing.com). Space is limited and RSVPs will be taken on a first come, first served basis.

In addition, Boeing will host the following festival / walking tour:

### Festival / Walking Tour

Saturday, June 23, 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

### Boeing Bee Fest with Pollinator Partnership, celebrating National Pollinator Week

This year, June 18 – 24 will be celebrated as Pollinator Week, a time the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service set aside to recognize the contribution of pollinators. In an effort to heighten awareness about the importance of pollinators and recognize the role these small creatures play in our daily existence, Boeing is hosting the first ever Boeing Bee Fest with the Pollinator Partnership. We will set up a portion of the site like a festival, with booths about pollinators, a guided biological walk and activities for kids. If you would like to join us, please email your RSVP to [ssflspecialevents@boeing.com](mailto:ssflspecialevents@boeing.com).

Some of the participating organizations include: San Fernando Valley Audubon Society, Theodore Payne Foundation for Wild Flowers and Native Plants Inc., Foundation for the Preservation of the Santa Susana Mountains, Tree People, L.A. County Bee Keepers Association, Friends of the Ballona Wetlands, Loyola Marymount University, Center for Urban Resilience and Ecological Solutions, California Certified Farmers Markets Inc., Backwards Beekeepers, San Fernando Valley Sierra Club and Simi at the Garden.

For more information, please visit us online at: [www.boeing.com/santasusana.com](http://www.boeing.com/santasusana.com)



**The Boeing Company**  
5800 Woolsey Canyon Rd.  
Canoga Park, CA 91304